

My story about the NBCC'S summit and lobby day May 2nd- 6th 2025.

I am happy to share my excitement, and gratitude with my recent scholarship experience attending this year's national breast cancer coalition summit and lobby day. I had heard from fellow patient advocates at other conferences how much they enjoyed the summit, and how it was absolutely something I should do. After experiencing and graduating the NBCC'S scientific training week-long course called Project Lead in 2024, I knew this was a next step in putting my training to great use in the policy legislative setting. This past week at summit I met a lot of new energized, passionate and dedicated patient advocates who had returned to summit year after year to engage and supporting the mission of ending all breast cancer, it is also at the summit where I got to reconnect with some dear friends who are also active patient advocates like me. It is no secret how critical this years representation at lobby day is more than ever to voice our concerns in regards to cuts to medical spending affecting all of us, not just with breast cancer, we had record numbers supporting these issues on Capitol Hill, meeting with state representatives, and legislators.

Between all of us patient advocates and our leaders, we covered over 200 meetings from 9:00 a.m. to 5 pm. We were very blessed that the weather allowed us to have numerous senators speak on the Capitol Lawn supporting the opposition to cutting funding to medical Care and research when it comes to Medicaid, Medicare and social security and clinical research grant funding. Our time at the summit included plenary sessions covering some of the latest data in regards to immunology the facts on different vaccines that are in production and heading to phase 1 trials through the Artemis project supported by NBCC. We also had wonderful workshops supporting us patient advocates in all the factors of addressing policy change, I felt we were really helped in all departments of not only understanding the current science, but understanding the implications and ramifications of cuts to the spending and walk the trickle down will be in years to come. We learned how impactful the NBCC has been over a span of three decades.

The work of Fran Visco is undeniably remarkable and has changed the landscape of breast cancer as we know it, and is fiercely committed to continuing the work. We were extremely busy throughout all the days but the time was so well spent learning and advancing our skills in advocacy. I found the conference to have a great balance between continued education and embracing policy advocacy. I was thrilled to have another fellow LBCA advocate join me in the summit and on lobby day. I really connected with Caroline and her father Jeffrey, and will remain in close contact, it was a pleasure to help her in any way I can ask she is interested in attending more conferences and learning more about getting more involved with the LBCA and the NBCC. By attending the Summit this has further balanced and rounded my advocacy and I am really appreciative for the opportunity to gain more insight and education .

I will be bringing my husband and son to Washington this Summer as our son missed going there with his 8th grade school trip because he broke his knee in April of last year. We will tour the capital as I feel it is vital to understand politics as it truly affects each and every one of us and democracy is beyond important to be familiar with. I am forever grateful to receive the scholarships, and I always put the things I learn to maximum use not only in my own community, and nationally on my platforms of advocacy. Thank you for supporting us patient advocates to

gain more education, by helping us to become informed and giving us the power to feel we have a platform and a voice to make real change.

- Ciara Mohan Gustafson